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[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED JAN. 12, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED FEB. 17, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED MAR. 1, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED APRIL 3, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED MAY 3, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' REPORT DATED JUNE 2, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED JULY 3, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED AUG. 1, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED SEPT. 1, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED OCT. 2, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED NOV. 7, 2006](#)  
[CLICK HERE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES's REPORT DATED DEC. 5, 2006](#)



DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

January 12, 2006

**Board of Supervisors**

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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro-Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN**

**INTRODUCTION**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the "Missing Children Task Force" in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis on planned and implemented practices to better serve children who have run away or have the potential to run away from out-of-home-care. The monthly reports should include the status of:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website to enable the provision of quality information on missing children related to numbers, demographics, and information that will evidence progress in both the prevention and recovering of missing children;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline's 24 hours/7 days per week ability to provide specialized support to DCFS in the screening and appropriate referral of calls it received regarding missing children;
- IV. Consideration of using the resources that will support the Countywide expansion of the Permanency Partners Program (P-3) to locate and plan for the permanency of runaway youth, and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by those young people who have run away with valid suggestions, corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

The following is a report of activities that have occurred toward addressing the above issues to date:

1. DCFS completed a thorough comprehensive reconciliation of the number of children currently missing, whether due to runaway or abduction. As of December 20, 2005, DCFS is tracking a total of 505 children missing from care: 309 children (61%) reported to be runaways; 196 children (39%) reported to be abducted. Of the 309 runaways, 209 children (68%) are ages 16 to 17; 91 children (29%) are ages 13 to 15; and 9 children (3%) are ages 12 and under (see attached). In addition, there are 119 individuals who are 18 or older who remain dependents of the Juvenile Court that have chosen to leave placement.

Information on missing children will be updated regularly and reported to the Board in the directed monthly reports, which will serve as a baseline to monitor the Department's progress in recovery and will measure the successes of the implemented strategies to reduce the number of missing children from our care.

2. DCFS is in the process of reconvening the Missing Children Task Force by forwarding invitations to Task Force members. It is anticipated that the first meeting will take place in January 2006, during which members will review the previous recommendations; the directives of the current Board motion; as well as issues, strategies and solutions to address the problem of children missing from care, as follows:
  - DCFS has completed a comprehensive review of the minutes from previous meetings of the "Missing Children's Task Force," which include co-location of DCFS with Law Enforcement; developing service strategies to prevent children from becoming chronic runaways; ensuring regular maintenance of current digital pictures of children in DCFS case files; considering warrant recall hearings that require an appearance of the child at Juvenile Court to ensure that the child understands he/she is valued; specialized training all staff working with this population of children; and developing a multi-disciplinary approach.
  - As part of the initial reconvened Task Force meeting, DCFS plans to review all previous recommendations, particularly those that relate to improving the existing missing children web-site; discussing enhancement of the DCFS/Law Enforcement protocol to address locating missing children; and developing collaborative training to effectively respond to this population of youth.
3. On December 6, 2005, DCFS issued a "For Your Information" (FYI) policy bulletin to all staff regarding Runaway and Child Abduction Procedures. The FYI informs staff that "it is departmental policy that when a child runs away from a placement, the case-carrying CSW will make all diligent efforts to locate the child on an ongoing basis until the child is located

or court jurisdiction is terminated;" and reminds staff of their step-by-step responsibilities when a child runs away or is abducted.

Additionally, in accordance with your Board's directive to consider using the resources that will support the Countywide expansion of the Permanency Partners Program (P3) to locate and plan for the permanency of runaway youth, effective immediately, for all new instances of children who run away from placement, the FYI directs all social work staff to initiate a referral to the P3 program for assistance in locating and stabilizing the child in a permanent placement. Furthermore, all children who are current runaways from placement are being referred to P3. Upon referral, P3 CSWs will assist case-carrying CSWs in locating children, stabilizing placements, and providing enhanced permanency planning services. Locating children who run away from their parents homes will continue to be a top priority of their case carrying CSW.

4. During the month of December, 2005, DCFS was very pleased to have successfully employed a collaborative approach whereby various departmental resources, including P3, Street Outreach Services (SOS), Adoption Safe Family Act (placement assessment unit), Emergency Response Command Post, and regional staff coordinated efforts that led to the safe recovery of a 16-year-old youth who eloquently addressed your Board on December 16, 2005. These successful strategies will be replicated to recover additional youth; and DCFS looks forward to the opportunity to consider all valid suggestions made by recovered youth to address the unique needs of this population.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Department of Children and Family Services thanks the Board for its attention to this very serious matter. The Department will continue to regularly review and direct resources and activities to provide services to troubled youth that will encourage them to remain in a safe environment as a preventive measure instead of running away, or to encourage them to return to a placement that will provide them with needed services and safely stabilize a permanent plan for them. In future monthly reports we will continue to provide you with updates on any efforts to address this very important population of children in our care.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:TP:pc

#### **Attachments**

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Department of Children and Family Services

Runaway Report

As of December 31, 2005

SPA	OFFICE	TOTAL	AGE			ER	SVC COMP			NR	MULTIPLE EVENTS					NR	LENGTH OF TIME AWOL					NR
			<12	13-15	16-17		4%	FW	FR		PP	0-1	2-3	4-5	8+		<2Wk	<1Mo	<3Mo	<1Yr	>1Yr	
Service Bureau 3	Lancaster	13	0	2	5				5	8	10	2	1						9	2	2	
	Palmdale	11		2	4				4	7	8	2	0					2	3	4	0	
	Total	24																				
2	N Hollywood	22	2	6	7				6	7	8	4	1					10	4	2	4	
	Santa Clarita	10		3	5				2	8	8	2	0					1	7	1	0	
	Total	32																				
3	Glendora	42	2	7	22				8	28	38	2	3					17	11	8	3	
	Pasadena	15	0	0	9				1	13	12	2	1					0	4	8	1	
	Pomona	18	2	10	13				3	13	11	5	1					1	11	3	0	
Service Bureau 2	Total	75																				
	Bureau 2	48		14	22				4	14	31	8	2					1	13	19	9	
	Metro North	48																			1	
5	West LA	3	2		1				1		2	3						0			3	
	Total	3																				
	Century	18	0	6	7				1	3	14	13	3	2				0	1	9	5	4
6	Compton	30		10	16				7	20	0	0	0					0	4	27	3	2
	MART	0	0						0		0	0	0					0	0	0	0	0
	Total	14		3	5				0	4	10	0	0	0				0	1	2	4	0
Service Bureau 1	Hawthorne	40	0	8	20				1	2	28	13	0					0	2	20	10	6
	Wentworth	109																				2
	Total	30	0	7	16				2	6	22	23	5	2				0	3	10	9	4
7	Belvedere	1		1	1				1		1	0	0					0	0	1	0	0
	Lafayette	38	1	8	26				3	6	30	5	8	0				1	1	14	7	6
	S F Springs	89																				8
8	Total	37	1	9	18				1	11	24	31	4	2				0	3	20	5	6
	Lakewood	17		5	7				6	11	11	4	1	1				0	1	10	3	0
	Torrance	54																				3
ADP	Total	2	0	1	1					2	1	1	0	0				0	0	1	0	1
	Adoption	2																				
	Total	2																				
Specialized Programs	Comets - SP	5	1	1	2				0	2	4	5	0	0				0	0	1	1	4
	Whittier - SP	5		3	2				0	2	3	1	3	1				3	1	0	4	0
	Total	11																				0
Grand Total		438	8	91	203	919	6	28	102	233	8	269	65	20	9	65	3	34	194	68	70	35

Under 18 subjects308

Under 18 subject 301

## as of December 20th, 2005

BPA	OFFICE	MINORS	0-2	3-5	6-9	10-17	18-47	18-47	18+	ER	SVC COMP		FR	PP	<2Wk	<1Mo	<6Mo	<1Yr	>1Yr
											FM	PM							
Service Bureau 3	Lancaster	2			1						1		1					1	
	Palmdale	4			1	3								4				4	
	Total	6			2	4													
	LA Hollywood	19	2	2	5	5	5	5			6			3	2	2	2	18	
	LA Santa Clarita	2			1									2		1		1	
Service Bureau 2	Total	21																	
	Glendale	16	1	3	3	2	4	2	1		3		1	12				4	12
	Pasadena	4				1	2	1			1		3		1			2	
	Porter	3			1	2					2			1				3	
	Total	23																	
Service Bureau 1	Metro North	31	3	3	7	0	7	5			6		4	22				3	27
	Total	31																	
	West LA	0																	
	Century	2	1			1								2				1	
	Donjon	1	1								1								
Service Bureau 1	LA F.R.	3																	
	Redlands	0																	
	Watts	2	4	2	3	8	3	2	1		10		1	10		5	6	11	
	Total	24																	
	LA Bakersfield	31		3	8	7	7	8			12		1	18				2	23
Service Bureau 1	LA Family S & P Springs	0																	
	Total	17	2	3	4	1	3	4			3			14		1	3	3	
	LA Lakewood	26		2	8	4	8	6	1		2		5	26		2		28	
	LA Torrance	13	1	1	3	1	4	3			2		5	4				11	
	Total	41																	
ADP	Adoption	0																	
	Total	0																	
	Specialized Programs	2			2						1		1						2
	Covina - SP																		
	Whittier - SP	2																	
Grand Total		198	13	19	41	41	45	39	3	0	49		16	139	0	8	12	11	22



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Board of Supervisors

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MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

February 17, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

**EXTENSION REQUEST - DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM # 16:  
MISSING CHILDREN**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the "Missing Children Task Force" in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

On January 6, 2006, DCFS submitted its first monthly report to the Board on "Missing Children." Since then, for the first time since its premature disbanding, on Wednesday, February 15, 2005, the reconvened Missing Children Task Force held its first meeting. Furthermore, we have staffed both the Youth and the Law Enforcement subcommittees. Finally, there has been a great deal of positive and critical activity throughout the Department around the runaway population. We have made significant strides with the integration of our permanency partners (P-3) staff and our runaway population; and our regional offices have implemented strategies and initiatives, which proffer updated best social practices.

As such, this is to respectfully request a two-week extension for the submission of the second monthly report on Missing Children. The additional time will allow the opportunity to provide a comprehensive report of the initial Missing Children Task Force meeting and the subsequent sub-committee meetings in order to more meaningfully reflect DCFS' renewed commitment to its runaway population.

Unless otherwise instructed, I will proceed with a new due date of Wednesday, March 1, 2006, for submission of the next monthly report on Missing Children, and continue to report on the first of every month thereafter. For any questions, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:sg

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

March 1, 2006

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
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Third District  
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To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavy, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM # 16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the "Missing Children Task Force" in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

- In order to be kept immediately abreast of on-going changes and to further refine department services for our Runaway youth population, and to ensure reconciliation of the numbers of runaways, I have named my Executive Assistant, Anita Shannon, as lead manager of this effort.

- P-3 workers are now routinely assigned to all runaways in the department. The collaborative effort has resulted in a successful partnership throughout the regional offices. A critical tool used by P-3 workers allows them to 'mine' significant family, friends, and other significant persons who are potential caregivers for the youth. Additional information on this significant and successful effort of the P-3 collaborative is highlighted throughout the remainder of the report.
- An internal workgroup comprised of social workers, regional and support managers met to delineate an appropriate definition for DCFS runaway youth. The exercise was done to adequately represent the target population that the Department serves and to denote the Department's legally recognized population of children and youth. The following is the definition that has been established by the Department via County Counsel:

**Runaway: Any child 17 years or younger in a Los Angeles County of Children and Family Services court-ordered foster care placement or court-ordered family maintenance placement *who willingly leaves placement without permission and is not taken by another individual.***

(Please note that youth 18 years and older will not be included in runaway count. However, we will continue to provide a documented count of that population of youth on the ARKS system and in our Board reports.)

## **CURRENT STATUS**

The following is a report of activities that have occurred toward addressing the above-named topics to date:

### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

The Department held its initial reconvened Task Force meeting on February 15, 2006. It was a highly productive meeting, bringing together 58 former participants and new partners. Those represented included Department personnel, the Commission, community partners, including foster parents, child advocates and community based organizations and educators, city and county law enforcement, County Probation and Mental Health. The meeting covered a brief history of the concerns and issues as they pertain to DCFS runaways and emphasized reestablishing previous partnerships and creating new ones. Participants also related past and current efforts and strategies used to accommodate the runaway population. There was also an in-depth discussion on what is working (Permanency) and how to replicate the successes. Community and county partners pledged support to the Department's runaway reform efforts by

committing to serve on one of two sub-committees labeled Law Enforcement and Youth Concerns. Successive Task Force meetings have also been scheduled. The dates are March 30 and April 27, 2006.

The Law Enforcement sub-committee will focus on efforts which will assist the courts with distinguishing between runaway youth and young adults. They will also work on producing recommendations, which support the Department's efforts of assisting chronic runaways by way of referrals to community resources as opposed to punitive measures, such as issuing warrants. Initial recommendations will be brought to the follow-up Task Force meeting on March 30, 2006.

The Emergency Response Command Post personnel have also been involved in initial planning meetings to discuss ways to interface with local law enforcement. Presently through participation on the Law Enforcement sub-committee, they are looking at ways to acknowledge Runaway youth in a manner that involves partnering with community resource and referral agencies.

## **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website:**

The Department has continued its work to implement protocol for timely submissions and monthly reconciliation of the numbers of children/youth defined as runaways. Presently, we have a total of 403 children/youth in a runaway status:

Ages 0-9 years = 0; Ages 10-13 years = 18; Ages 14-17 years = 385 – Total 403

As denoted in the attachment, 96% of the population is between the ages of 14-17\*. 71% of our runaway population is female\*. Additionally, 58% of our runaways are of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity and the majority of runaways, 33%, are in court-ordered foster homes. Finally, the majority of runaways, 20%, come from our SPA 6 - an area where we have already begun implementing multiple strategies, including extensive community partnering. (\*The above-mentioned statistics correspond to National statistics according to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Additional information on DCFS runaway statistics is available per the attachment.)

The Department has also engaged in initial planning meetings with pertinent Department staff, including court services, social work, and management staff to implement protocol for reporting runaways daily. Past efforts did not include daily reconciliation of runaway episodes and as such, the ARKS website did not consistently reflect the accurate number of runaways. It is critical to forward runaway episodes to the courts daily, as well as to inform the courts of children/youth who have been located. We now have a point person in each regional office that is responsible for entering and extracting information by way of the ARKS system. Further, so that we have consistent and accurate data entry, we will be conducting on-going ARKS data

entry training for regional staff with the assistance of our court services, BIS and Training Divisions.

The Department has inventoried and ordered additional cameras for all regional offices. The supplemental inventory will assist us in our endeavor to ensure mass training on Kidpix – a system by which child/youth pictures are taken and immediately downloaded onto the ARKS website. This training will allow for identifying information to be posted in an expedient manner.

The Department has also initiated a redesign of the ARKS website. Through a collaborative effort with the County's Internal Services Department (ISD), DCFS will endeavor to make the site more user-friendly. Changes will include citing the runaway definition; separating out 18+ year olds from the DCFS defined runaway population; and, noting abducted youth on a separate web page with more defined links to the local law enforcement and national resources. In addition, we will be able to access more qualitative and quantitative data for use with trend analysis.

### **III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Department has begun initial training with key staff, which outlines interfacing with calls dealing with Runaways. Staff is being trained to ask specific questions regarding the population and Regional management is a member of both the reconvened Task Force and Law Enforcement sub-committee. Connections have also been made with local law enforcement through the involvement of the Department's MART team. The preliminary plan is to relay recommendations that will come out of the work done by the Task Force sub-committees and partner to create strategies to implement policies and protocol which will assist the Runaway population in a manner which is conducive to the needs of the population.

### **IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

Initial collaborative efforts with regional offices and P-3 staff have already resulted in successful outcomes. Throughout the Department, regional line staff and P-3 workers are effectively partnering and the results are promising. In the past three weeks, P-3 worker efforts to locate or verify the location of 18 youth were successful (including two who were residing in Mexico).

P-3 staff throughout the Department continue to work on closing runaway episodes. They are assisting the CSWs with both location and placement efforts. Through the use of tools exclusively designed to access a host of family, and other significant adults, P-3 workers are successfully assisting permanency efforts.

The February Task Force Meeting also featured a presentation of the P-3 efforts with the runaway youth population. To date, three meetings have been convened, which have served to further the incorporation of P-3 strategies with the current case work of the departmental staff designated specifically for the runaway population – Street Outreach Services (SOS) and Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP). In those meetings, plans have been laid to facilitate RAP's involvement in training regional staff on the characteristics and detailed strategies used to service the population. Moreover, the RAP staff have started to compile curriculum used in their unique work to share with the Department's training staff. The intent being to instigate highlighting strategies utilized which are unique to runaway youth.

In addition, through your support of our on-going permanency efforts, we will shortly have the ability to bring on a significant complement of additional P-3 workers. The resource will be distributed across the Department and will appreciably enhance our ability to implement strategies to increase permanency goals and reduce the runaway population.

**VI. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy:**

Upon reconvening the Runaway Task Force the Department was successful in its engagement of youth. Youth attendees and representatives came from the community as well as former foster youth, the current Emancipation Ombudsman and a community worker (former foster youth presently working for the Department). Their input was instrumental in shaping the reconvened Task Force agenda and agenda items for the subsequently formed Law Enforcement and Youth Concerns sub-committees.

The Youth Concerns sub-committee was able to identify 'triggers' for runaway behavior. The issues cited mirrored the 'top 10 issues' listed by the National Runaway Switchboard organization. They included concerns involving family dynamics (including domestic violence), school, mental health, sexuality, youth services, transportation, peers, and alcohol/drug abuse.

The Youth Concerns sub-committee established their focus by committing to identifying resources and strategies that would assist in allaying the 'triggers' for runaways. There was a great deal of discussion around preventative actions that should be implemented and/or reinforced by the Department. In addition, discussion centered around the need to continue on the path of permanency options and the availability of mentors – particularly for emancipating youth. As such, the Task Force agreed to identify Department initiatives and practices, which are working and should, perhaps, be

expanded upon. The group will bring initial recommendations to the next Task Force meeting to be held on March 30, 2006.

### **CONCLUSION**

It should be noted that the Runaway population we are reporting on encompass a myriad of issues and concerns which dictate the partnering of various resources simultaneously. To that end the Department's concerted permanency goals and resultant efforts will continue to allow us a varied, more holistic approach in addressing the root causes of Runaway behavior. As referenced above we have engaged multiple stakeholders, community advocates and county partners. As such, through Department efforts such as Point of Engagement (POE), and P-3; the solicitation of enhanced mental and medical health services; Juvenile Court and Law Enforcement involvement and Community resource partnering we may more inclusively address the factors needed for developing and maintaining well-being.

The Department of Children and Family Services thanks the Board for its attention to this urgent matter. The Department will continue to regularly review and direct resources to the goals of the Department – Safety, Permanency, and Reduced Reliance on Out-of-Home Care. Additionally, through the work of the reconvened Runaway Task Force, we will continue our efforts to effectively engage in an on-going collaboration with our County and Community partners and stakeholders for the appropriate provision of services which most significantly impact our runaway population. We will continue to report on current and consequential efforts involving our runaway youth in future Board reports.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:vm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**March 1, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	403	
<b>Age</b>		
0-9 years old	0	0%
10-13 years old	18	4%
14-17 years old	385	96%
	403	
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	287	71%
Male	116	29%
	403	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian	4	1%
Black	89	22%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	2%
Hispanic/Latino	234	58%
White	69	17%
	403	
<b>Location of CSW</b>		
SPA 1	27	6%
SPA 2	43	10%
SPA 3	68	16%
SPA 4	41	9%
SPA 5	10	2%
SPA 6	79	20%
SPA 7	67	15%
SPA 8	53	12%
Adoption	2	0%
Specialized Programs	13	3%
	403	



DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D  
Director

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Fifth District

April 3, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D. *DS*  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM # 16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the "Missing Children Task Force" in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

- The second Runaway Task Force meeting was held on March 30, 2006. There were 46 members in attendance. Participants included community partners and stakeholders, emancipated and pre-emancipating youth, city and county law enforcement, probation, education, mental, medical health, Commission for Children

and Families and DCFS personnel. The agenda centered on departmental and both the Law Enforcement and Youth Concerns Sub-committee updates, including specific recommendations to be discussed, considered and potentially implemented. The recommendations will be outlined presently in this report.

- The Law Enforcement Sub-committee met prior to the March 30<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting. They were able to inform the meeting agenda by forwarding several recommendations and topics for discussion. The information provided by them will be detailed shortly.
- The Youth Concerns Sub-committee also met prior to the second Task Force meeting. They, too, informed the agenda via recommendations and topics for discussion. Their input will also be outlined in greater detail presently.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

#### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

DCFS staff continues to work on the refinement of reporting runaway episodes in a timely and effective manner through its ARKs website. Currently, staff, through sub-committee planning are working on rolling out a training Department-wide. That training will consist of instruction on appropriately entering key information on runaways by designated regional office personnel. Further, the training will provide staff with updated procedures, which enhance the gathering and quantifying statistical information obtained on runaway episodes for further use. Finally, training will also include introduction of an updated minute order document, which consolidates information pertinent to runaway youth. That information is presently captured on three separate documents and the enhanced, consolidated document will support efforts to streamline existing reporting structures by reducing duplicative efforts.

#### **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website:**

DCFS has worked diligently since it's last report to the Board to improve maintenance of the Missing Children's website, better known as ARKs. To date, we have aggressively gathered data on runaway episodes that will further assist us in quantifying critical information. Additionally, the Law Enforcement Sub-committee committed to exploring several potential endeavors that would support maintenance of ARKs:

- Create a shared data base for DCFS and law enforcement use; and
- Identify a "go to" person/manager who has or is able to access information, statistics, etc., on runaway population within the Department.

(Please note attachment for current statistical information on DCFS runaway youth.)

(Please note attachment for current statistical information on DCFS runaway youth.)

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

DCFS continues to train its key Hotline staff on the appropriate ways in which to interface with runaways. Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) staff has participated in training vis-à-vis provision of relevant resource information. In addition, the law enforcement sub-committee submitted several ideas and concepts for on-going consideration and implementation into department practice. Items for consideration are as follows:

- Solicit involvement from as many law enforcement jurisdictions as possible;
- Create partnership between law enforcement and DCFS which handles runaway juveniles only;
- Denote accountability for runaway episodes via DCFS contracting process;
- Provide training for caregivers, potentially through the Kinship Division, on runaway behaviors; and
- Further define and refine existing Department and law enforcement policies concerning runaway procedural concerns.

The above-outlined strategies were discussed at the March 30th Task Force Meeting and the Law Enforcement Sub-committee made a commitment to explore and potentially implement several ideas. The Sub-committee will report back at the next Task Force Meeting.

**IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1<sup>st</sup> Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

As stated earlier in the report, the Youth Concerns Sub-committee met and forwarded a number of recommendations to be discussed and sanctioned at the March 30<sup>th</sup> Task Force Meeting. The following proposals were submitted for additional consideration and consensus:

- Utilize the technical expertise contained in the I-TRACK system – software used for law enforcement tracking;
- Develop a questionnaire to capture information, including reasons given for runaway episodes;

- Reinstate regional office Youth clubs;
- Enhance the Department's Mentorship Division;
- Hire Emancipated youth; and
- Reinstate pre-placement policy.

The proposals above were subject to a great deal of discussion, including commitment by the Sub-committee to continue working toward implementation.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, DCFS remains committed to appropriately and adequately dealing with the complex issues and valid concerns that surround the runaway population. We will continue to employ departmental strategies and initiatives designed to further enhance permanency. We thank you for your committed attention to this significant matter. We will continue to report on current, on-going and subsequent efforts involving our runaway youth in future Board reports.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:vm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**March 31, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	413		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	22	5%	
14-17 years old	291	70%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	313		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	295	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	118	29%	
	413		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	5	1%	
Black	102	25%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	1%	
Hispanic/Latino	243	59%	
White	58	14%	
	413		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	191	46%	
Group Home	133	32%	
Relative/Guardian Home	83	20%	
(Not Indicated)	6	1%	
	413		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	15	4%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	6	1%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	14	3%	
SPA 3 Glendora	39	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	16	4%	
SPA 3 Pomona	17	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	43	14%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	8	2%	
SPA 6 Century	24	8%	
SPA 6 Compton	26	6%	



DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors

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ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

May 3, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

- The third Runaway Task Force meeting was held on April 27, 2006. There were 36 members in attendance. Participants included community partners and stakeholders, emancipated and pre-emancipating youth, city and county law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, medical health, Commission for Children and Families and DCFS personnel. The agenda again, centered on

departmental and both the Law Enforcement and Youth Concerns Sub-committee updates, including specific recommendations to be discussed, considered and potentially implemented. The recommendations will be outlined presently in this report.

- The Law Enforcement Sub-committee was unable to meet prior to the April 27 Task Force meeting; however, they will be meeting in the month of May. They did report at the April 27 meeting that individual members of the committee have been working on identified action items.
- The Youth Concerns Sub-committee met on April 26, 2006. They informed the agenda via recommendations and topics for discussion. Their input will also be outlined in greater detail presently.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

#### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

Work on the refinement of reporting runaway episodes in a timely and effective manner continues to be a major focus among DCFS and stakeholders. Currently, staff through sub-committee planning, have created and finalized an ARKS data input curriculum designed to train identified staff in each office who will be responsible for the daily data entry into the ARKS system. The target date for training to begin is June 1, 2006. The training will consist of instruction on appropriately entering key information on runaways and will also provide staff with updated procedures, which enhance the gathering and quantifying of statistical information obtained on runaway episodes for further use.

In addition, the sub-committee has finalized an updated minute order document, which consolidates information pertinent to runaway youth. That information is presently captured on three separate documents and the enhanced, consolidated document will support efforts to streamline existing reporting structures by reducing duplicative efforts. The document has been submitted to the Court and union representatives for approval. Once approved the document will be introduced to staff during the ARKS data entry training and through the DCFS Intranet.

To support the changes being made to address our runaways, we are reassessing those policies that deal with this population. To date, we have combined, added to, and even eliminated policies in an effort to update departmental practice and ensure consistent and uniform application. The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) staff have participated in training vis-à-vis provision of relevant resource information. RAP staff are in the process of compiling a profile on every runaway youth in the ARKS data base in an effort to collect vital information that will not only assist in finding the youth,

but also help to create a workable custom-made permanent placement plan for each youth, and provide valuable information on why youth runaway.

## **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website:**

DCFS continues to work diligently to improve maintenance of the Missing Children's Website, better known as ARKs. We continue to work aggressively at gathering data. DCFS Bureau of Information continues to assess and make necessary changes to the computer program to enhance the ARKS system, helping to make ARKS information more accurate and more accessible.

Additionally, the Law Enforcement Sub-committee will continue to explore several potential endeavors that would support maintenance of ARKs which include:

- Creating a shared data base for DCFS and law enforcement use; and
- Identifying a "go to" person/manager who has or is able to access information, statistics, etc., on runaway population within the Department.

(Please note attachment for current statistical information on DCFS runaway youth.)

## **III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Emergency Response Command Post and the Hotline are working to interface with other law enforcement agencies across the nation by utilizing the National Runaway Hotline. By entering the names of our runaway youth into the national data base, we have the potential of recovering them in a more timely fashion and can draw on the expertise of other law enforcement agencies.

The Emergency Response Command Post and the Hotline have created logs to better track runaways that come through the front-end of our system and are able to reconnect them to their social workers and other resources much faster.

In addition, the Law Enforcement Sub-committee continues to work on shaping initial ideas and concepts, which were outlined in the April 3, 2006 report. The Sub-committee will report back at the next Task Force Meeting on June 22, 2006.

## **IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. The P-3 staff have located a total of 107 runaway youth thus far. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Concerns Sub-committee met and forwarded a number of recommendations to be discussed and sanctioned at the April 27 Task Force Meeting. The following proposals were submitted for additional consideration and consensus:

- Identify a means for tracking repeat runaways,
- Specialized training for caregivers regarding runaway youth; teenage behavior and crisis intervention,
- Placement mediation liaison to address reasons for runaway episodes with caregiver and youth,
- Flexibility in placement to allow for a more normal experience,
- Recruitment campaign for permanent placement options for teenagers,
- Develop communication protocol between DCFS, Community Care Licensing and the Ombudsman office,
- Ongoing training for DCFS staff and caregivers.

The proposals above were subject to a great deal of discussion. The reoccurring theme throughout the discussion was "training". It was felt that training was necessary for all of those involved with the runaway population. However before training could commence the committee agreed on the need to identify the content of the training curriculum. Prior to the June 22, 2006 Runaway Task Force Meeting, individual committee members agreed to the following tasks:

- Outline how the training would be done,
- Identify CWLA/DCFS training opportunities for caregivers,
- Obtain information on reasons youth runaway by talking directly to youth in placement,
- Enhance current runaway resources on ILP website,
- Convene a focus group with prior runaway youth.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, DCFS remains committed to continuing it's exploration of complex issues and addressing the valid concerns that surround the runaway population. We will continue to employ departmental strategies and initiatives, with input from community stakeholders, which are designed to further enhance permanency. We thank you for your committed attention to this significant matter. We will continue to report on current, on-going and subsequent efforts involving our runaway youth in future Board reports.

Each Supervisor  
May 3, 2006  
Page 5

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:vm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**May 4, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	419		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	18	4%	
14-17 years old	401	96%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	419		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	309	74%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	110	26%	
	419		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	119	28%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	239	57%	
White	51	12%	
	419		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	202	48%	
Group Home	124	30%	
Relative/Guardian Home	82	20%	
(Not Indicated)	11	3%	
	419		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	9	2%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	15	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	24	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	14	3%	
SPA 3 Glendora	37	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	19	5%	
SPA 3 Pomona	15	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	42	10%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	12	3%	
SPA 6 Century	21	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	21	5%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	9	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	43	10%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	41	10%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	27	6%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	30	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	22	5%	
Adoptions	3	1%	
Specialized Programs	15	4%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	419		



DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D.  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
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Fifth District

June 2, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

- The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) team has been conducting extensive analysis on the runaway population. Thus far a total of 50% of the cases in 10 offices have been concluded. Specific findings will be outlined in greater detail below.

- The refinement of reporting runaway episodes continues. To date departmental workgroups have completed the training curriculum needed to bring regional office staff up to consistent standard regarding ARKs data entry. The utility of this exercise is consistent with the directive of providing expeditious, quantifiable departmental information on runaways. Upon the completion of training all regional offices will have the capability to access and input data into the ARKs system.
- There have been no Task Force meetings held since May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2006. The content of the meeting will be detailed in a subsequent Board report.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

**I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

The Departments Emergency Response Command Post continues to monitor for runaway youth. That division has also been charged with documenting special circumstances, needs, etc., of that population. The information is being used to facilitate enhanced regional office Team Decision-Making (TDM's) efforts and permanent placement options.

The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) staff has done extensive profiling of the Runaway population thus far. Presently they have completed detailed histories of 50% of the Runaway population in 10 of the 18 regional offices. The findings will assist departmental planning. (Major ones detailed below.)

- Repeat Runaway – Information shows that over 60% of the population have repeat runaway episodes.
- Substance Abuse – Information shows that over 50% of the population have admitted to the use of controlled substances.
- Mental Health needs – Information shows that 40% of the population have documented mental health information, including visits and/or hospitalizations.
- Teen Pregnancies – Information shows that 30% of the population are or have recently been pregnant and will return to court-ordered care to access pre-natal and/or infant medical care.

Please note that information is preliminary and based upon analysis of the data on the Runaway population, beginning January 1, 2006.

**II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

Improvements continue to be made on the ARKs web site. Improvements include:

- Enhanced data entry capabilities
- Training staff on updated technology
- Training staff on enhanced Runaway definition

Additionally, the task force members have engaged in discussions about the "break out" groupings for the Runaways. We are currently working through sub-committees on various ways in which the Department can adequately code those "sub-categories" of youth. One of the categories would include denoting youth that are in a runaway status yet "whereabouts" are known. For example, we are finding many youth whom once "placed" again by the Department run back to unauthorized placements. We are in receipt of such information through case documentation upon social workers repeated attempts to complete visits, locate youth, etc. Additionally, through best efforts to locate Runaways social workers frequently speak with family members, extended kin, etc., and receive corroborating information.

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

We remain committed to working with various jurisdictions via the Hotline. Through the practice of mining cases we have found that many of our youth run to other counties and are taking up 'unauthorized' residency. These counties include San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange County. In addition, the social workers are finding (through contact with family members) that youth have relocated to other countries, including Mexico and Guadalajara. As a result of this information the Department is looking at policy revisions which will allow us to appropriately document 'best efforts' at locating these youth by maintaining regular contact with the appropriate jurisdictions.

**IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Concerns sub-committee continues to meet and as reported prior offer up recommendations. The following recommendations have been acted upon:

Identify a means of tracking repeat runaways – through the work of departmental sub-committees repeat runaway episodes are being tracked. The RAP/SOS unit now has primary responsibility for quantifying such information regularly. The information will be used specifically to assist P-3 workers in their efforts to locate and permanently place repeat Runaways.

Flexibility in placement to allow for a more normal experience – The Department has implemented the strategy of Team Decision-Making (TDM's). The effort allows a forum by which to more appropriately tailor care for this population of youth. In addition, Deputy Directors are providing on-going direction which includes information on incorporating specific strategies for engaging this population. Additionally, the Bureau of Resources is in receipt of specific information on the Runaway population. The linkage will assist in accessing resources specifically tailored to dealing with Runaway youth.

## **CONCLUSION**

DCFS will continue to explore concerns, strategies and proven outcomes as they relate to the Runaway population. The analysis being conducted by RAP will allow us to further define additional resources and strategies. Additionally, the work being done through the Task Force and its sub-committees will also provide guided and expert direction. It is in this spirit that we will continue to report our efforts with regard to the Runaway population.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:vm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**June 1, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	437		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	21	5%	
14-17 years old	416	95%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	437		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	310	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	127	29%	
	437		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	2	0%	
Black	114	26%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	257	59%	
White	54	12%	
	437		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	213	49%	
Group Home	145	33%	
Relative/Guardian Home	71	16%	
(Not Indicated)	8	2%	
	437		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	11	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	17	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	30	7%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	13	3%	
SPA 3 Glendora	36	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	19	4%	
SPA 3 Pomona	16	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	48	11%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	14	3%	
SPA 6 Century	24	8%	
SPA 6 Compton	24	5%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	11	3%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	43	10%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	36	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	27	6%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	32	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	18	4%	
Adoptions	3	1%	
Specialized Programs	15	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	437		



DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
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Board of Supervisors  
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Third District  
**DON KNABE**  
Fourth District  
**MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH**  
Fifth District

July 3, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

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- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

As noted in a prior Board communication, the Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens Systems (ARKs) data base training was in the planning stages. As of June 28, 2006, all regional office training has been completed. Presently, per office, the Department has three individuals trained in ARKs data entry protocol.

This strategic training will ensure the input and extraction of information that should occur upon each runaway episode or recall. Additionally, it will allow for enhanced management of each regional office's Runaway population.

The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) continues to conduct analysis on the overall Runaway population. Currently 50% of the Runaway population in 14 offices have been completed. As previously stated, the data continues to show youth that has histories of substance abuse, multiple runs, and mental health interactions. The information thus far gathered has been shared with Regional Administrators in an effort to assist with individual office strategies. Upon completion of analysis for all offices, comprehensive information will be detailed in forthcoming report.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

#### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post:**

The Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor for runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences.

#### **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

Through task force discussion and sub-committee work the Department is looking at recommendations which further define the Runaway population. Based on the information that has been entered into ARKs since December 2005, we are beginning to see trends. Those trends inform us of various sub-populations including substance abusers, multiple runners and pregnant teens. Part of the rationale for redefining Runaways would include acknowledgement of undesirable but straightforward circumstances of sub-groups, which allow us an improved opportunity to tailor strategies and services.

To further expound, the task force has discussed the variance among substance abusers. For example, we have multiple case file notations of youth that have engaged in marijuana usage and we have information on youth that use methamphetamines. While they are both illegal substances the intervention strategies for each would vary greatly. We have also noted a group of youth that are multiple runners. This group too may be subdivided. There are those youth that feel "stability" in a placement that the Department may not legally sanction, and there are those youth who believe they are adult enough to live either on their own and/or with a partner – each grouping repeatedly runs back to the unsanctioned placement. We also have information on

youth that have had multiple mental health interactions. However, a mental health interaction may denote a youth that has been hospitalized or a youth that has been seen by a mental health professional and prescribed medication(s). Each scenario would dictate different and perhaps multiple strategies. We will continue discussion and analysis and put forth additional strategies at a later date.

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Department, through task force recommendation, via the Law Enforcement sub-committee, has begun to liaison with the State in an effort to appropriately note Runaway youth that have been missing for an extended, consecutive amount of time. Through interface with the State we will have an enhanced ability to connect with other city, county, and state jurisdictions. This action also allows us additional collaborative partnerships through which we may locate Runaways.

**IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Concerns sub-committee continues to meet independent of the Task Force. However, to-date, no further recommendations have been forwarded for the Department to act upon. Nonetheless, we remain committed to their previous recommendations of 1) Identifying a means of tracking repeat runaways, and 2) Allowing flexibility in placement to allow for a more normal experience. The Department values the input of this sub-committee and will continue to encourage and engage their on-going participation.

**CONCLUSION**

DCFS will continue its work to further comprehend and appropriately service the Runaway population and its sub-groups and to ultimately decrease this population through the use of permanency strategies. While we continue to achieve successes through our use of P-3 workers and use of TDM conferences, we are cognizant of the

Each Supervisor  
July 3, 2006  
Page 4

additional work and will continue implementing the recommendations forwarded by the task force and its sub-committees.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**July 5, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	450		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	25	6%	
14-17 years old	425	94%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	450		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	322	72%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	128	28%	
	450		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	125	28%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	250	56%	
White	61	14%	
	450		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	203	45%	
Group Home	152	34%	
Relative/Guardian Home	89	20%	
(Not Indicated)	6	1%	
	450		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	10	2%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	18	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	30	7%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	11	2%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	40	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	20	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	45	10%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	17	4%	
SPA 6 Century	21	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	25	6%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	9	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	43	10%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	39	9%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	35	8%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	34	8%	
SPA 8 Torrance	19	4%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	15	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	450		



JOAN SMITH,  
Acting Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors

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ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

August 1, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Joan Smith   
Acting Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

The last Task Force meeting was convened on June 22, 2006. There were 31 attendees and both the Law Enforcement and Youth Concerns Sub-committees gave reports and updates regarding their on-going work. The detail from the work of the sub-committees will be put forth in the body of this report.

As reported in the July 3, 2006, memorandum to the Board, training of all departmental staff involved with Abducted and Runaway Kids site (ARKs) reporting has been completed. Preliminary findings have shown that office liaisons are appropriately interfacing with the court, correctly entering viable data on youth runaways, and noting special circumstances, etc., that may impact P-3 on-going efforts to find permanent placements. The training was also successful in that it has identified liaisons throughout all regional offices thereby ensuring a heightened level of awareness of each office's runaway population.

The Runaway Adolescent Program unit has completed its analysis of 50% of each regional office's runaway population. As stated in prior Board reports we now have quantifiable, baseline information regarding this population and trend information. Those trends are pronounced in the areas of mental health interactions, substance abuse histories and multiple runs. Upon completed analysis we have also been able to see a clearer picture of those runaway youth that have relocated out of our jurisdiction. Additional information will be put forth shortly.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

**I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

As outlined in the July report to the Board, the Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences.

**II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

Refinement of the ARKs data base continues via recommendations of the Runaway Task Force and the department's Bureau of Information Services (BIS) division. For example, in the last month we have requested programming efforts that allow for additional, varied ways to sort the data of runaway youth. This capability allows us to look at the population in many different ways and allows for enhanced discussions on ways in which we may best service this population.

The clean up on the ARK's site has been completed. We have successfully removed all outdated information on our runaway population and now monitor daily and maintain the systems integrity via newly trained regional office liaison efforts.

Additionally, BIS remains committed to monitoring the web site for corrupted data. The Bureau also provides technical assistance, which allows the Task Force a realistic, nuanced picture of the Department's Runaway youth.

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Law Enforcement sub committee continues to meet and discuss ideas, which may lead to additional recommendations for the Department. Upon receipt of information on RAP's completed analysis on regional office Runaways, committee members discussed the viability of augmented collaborative efforts across jurisdictions.

RAP's analysis showed a significant number of youth who have AWOL'ed across county and state lines. It further showed, through CSW due diligence, that youth – though still wards of our court – have “settled” in these unauthorized environments. There is substantial information on youth that are living with parents/relatives, residing with domestic partners, attending school and birthing children.

Continued Task Force and Law Enforcement committee discussion around jurisdictional collaborative efforts would begin to address some of the current realities presented by the Runaway population. For example, the Department currently utilizes the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) to relocate children and youth to other jurisdictions, often across state lines. However, we don't currently account for runaway youth that have crossed state lines in this manner. Yet, upon locating a runaway youth in an out-of-state region the Department could potentially explore other options, which include obtaining court sanction for the youth's current placement and collaboratively identified criteria across states. Cases where this could happen and serve the best interest of the youth are those in which our Department has made contact with the jurisdiction's Child Welfare Department. A thorough assessment could be conducted and if it has been determined that the minor is safe and residing in a stable placement, which offers permanency and well being then DCFS could implement use of an ICPC. Further discussion is scheduled to take place regarding this option.

**IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Concerns Sub-committee was not able to meet prior to the last Task Force meeting. However, the committee introduced the Torrance regional office staff who presented on their runaway youth focus group meeting. In attendance were committee members of the Youth Concerns Sub-committee along with 40 youth and 10 caregivers. The purpose was to listen to youth as they detailed the reasons for why they run, to whom, and where they run. The youth also provided comprehensive details on how they sustained and protected themselves during AWOL status.

The Department has identified several strategies by which to track repeat runaway information, per the recommendation of the Youth Concerns Sub-committee. Presently we track the population in several ways, via age groupings and number of days AWOL, allowing us the ability to employ varying strategies. In addition, we have solicited the expertise of the Department's Resource Division. Through this operation we are gathering information and forwarding recommendations, which will impact how we contract with caregivers/providers in the future. Reports to the Board on the work of this Bureau will be forthcoming as it develops.

**CONCLUSION**

DCFS will continue to work through its regional offices, support bureaus and Task Force recommendations to ensure that enhanced efforts are applied to the runaway population. We are confident that the analysis done on this population will assist us with accessing a continuum of services needed to make an effective impact. The Department is greatly committed to effecting a viable permanency outcome designed to produce outcomes consistent with the Department's three goals of safety, permanency and reduced reliance on detentions.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

JS:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**July 28, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	438		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	21	5%	
14-17 years old	417	95%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	438		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	305	70%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	133	30%	
	438		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	5	1%	
Black	125	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	12	3%	
Hispanic/Latino	240	55%	
White	56	13%	
	438		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	199	45%	
Group Home	151	34%	
Relative/Guardian Home	81	18%	
(Not Indicated)	7	2%	
	438		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	12	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	17	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	17	4%	
SPA 3 El Monte	2	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	39	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	13	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	18	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	38	9%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	16	4%	
SPA 6 Century	20	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	23	5%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	9	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	40	9%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	37	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	36	8%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	34	8%	
SPA 8 Torrance	20	5%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	18	4%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	438		



JOAN SMITH,  
Acting Director

**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

**Board of Supervisors**

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**MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH**  
Fifth District

September 1, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Joan Smith  
Acting Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN  
MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

There was no Task Force meeting held in August due to conflicting schedules and vacations. The next meeting will be held on September 7, 2006, and a full account will be detailed in October's report to the Board.

The Runaway Adolescent Program (RAP) unit continues to analyze the data it collected on the regional office Runaway population. In their course of mining the data, the Department continues to glean more detail on this population, which in turn helps us to continue to employ specific strategies and initiatives. For example, we are continuing to find instances where there may be a way to utilize our existing Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children agreements. Specific detail via a department case example will be detailed later in this report. Additionally, analysis of the Runaway population shows a need to thoroughly review the appropriateness of homes, in which we find youth living against court order. In some cases, we may be able to legally clear the living arrangement, thereby honoring the wish of the youth to stay in a placement they have deemed suitable and the court has sanctioned. An example of a case, which details the activity of procuring Adoptions Safe Families Act, ASFA, compliance, is outlined in Section V of this report.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

**I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

As outlined in the July report to the Board, the Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor runaway youth. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes in the supports given via DCFS Emergency Response Command Post.

**II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

The ARKs database is being maintained via regional office liaisons that enter data on their specific runaway population. The database is also monitored by BIS in an effort to stay abreast of routine programmatic concerns. While the clean up of the site has been completed, we remain committed to maintaining the integrity of the data.

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

As reported in the August Board Report, the Department has begun to look at ways to utilize existing strategies, including our Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, ICPC, agreements. Detailed below is a case that P-3 staff is working on:

L. T. (17-year-old young woman) was taken into care in July 2004, when her father died.

Her mother was living in Wisconsin and an ICPC agreement was initiated but subsequently denied when mother declined placement until her daughter agreed to participate in drug counseling. Since the disposition on July 2004, L. T. has continually AWOLed from placement with her longest stay in placement being 20 days. She has been AWOL since November 2004. Periodically, friends and relatives reported that they had spoken to L. T. or thought they might know her location (at one point it was suggested that she resided in New Jersey). The P3 worker began to make telephone calls to all known relatives. When the P3 worker attempted to call mother at her home in Wisconsin on June 27, 2004, the child, L. T. answered the phone. The P3 worker was able to get the youth to confirm that she was L. T. She stated she was living in that home, doing well and refused any other placement. The P3 worker was then able to assist the CSW in connecting with the mother and L. T. later. The mother informed the CSW that L.T had been staying with her for some time. L.T was attending high school, completing her school credits for graduation. (CSW has contacted the school and has verified enrollment) L. T. also has a part-time job at McDonalds. L.T. reports that she is happy with her mother and wants to have her jurisdiction terminated when she turns 18 in several weeks. L. T. informed the CSW that her mother is providing for all her basic needs and that she is getting along well with her mother and other family members.

The above case illustrates a typical category of Runaway youth. The youth has multiple runs, and substance abuse issues. In addition the case is typical in that the youth has returned to a relative "placement" not sanctioned by the court. This case is illustrative of the need for an ICPC for use as a strategy. (Please note at the time of this report the minor is 18 years of age.)

#### **IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding to this strategy.

#### **V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Concerns sub-committee has made a consistent request to have youth live with those adults they choose to live with. They have cited, in several different forums, that their wish is to be placed with adults who genuinely care for them and to not be placed at group homes.

To that point, please see below information on a case in which the Department was able, through the work of P-3 and line staff, to place a runaway youth:

I.T. (14 year-old male youth) and his family came into the system in December 2005 when mother abandoned several of his siblings at a park. I.T. was not with his siblings when they were abandoned and his whereabouts have been unknown for the duration of this case. The P3 worker was assigned to the case on May 3, 2006, to assist his social worker in locating I.T. On May 9, 2006, the P3 worker was able to locate I.T. at the home of one of his friends.

I.T. had previously been living on and off with relatives and had not been in school for over one year. The P3 worker spoke with the friend's mother who agreed to work with the Department to provide a placement for I.T. The P3 worker referred the non-relative extended family member, NREFM, for live scan and for an ASFA assessment. I.T. has now been officially placed with this NREFM and has been enrolled in summer school as well as a tutoring program. I.T. has had three visits with his mother since being placed and at least twice a month visits with his six siblings.

We have additional work to do for those runaways who have essentially found a home for themselves. The challenge has predominantly been the ability to clear, via ASFA standards, those persons a youth may be interested in living with.

## **CONCLUSION**

DCFS will continue to work on its ARKs data base maintenance efforts, as well as carry on its analysis of the Runaway population. The Department remains committed to promoting a variety of viable permanency strategies designed to produce outcomes consistent with the Department's three goals of safety, permanency and reduced reliance on detentions.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Susan Jakubowski, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

JS:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**  
**August 28, 2006**

Category	Totals / Subtotal	Percent	Comments
Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System	427		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	12	3%	
14-17 years old	415	97%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	427		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	294	69%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	133	31%	
	427		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	117	27%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	13	3%	
Hispanic/Latino	236	55%	
White	58	14%	
	427		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	185	43%	
Group Home	147	34%	
Relative/Guardian Home	89	21%	
(Not Indicated)	6	1%	
	427		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	12	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	18	4%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	29	7%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	15	4%	
SPA 3 El Monte	2	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	39	9%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	13	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	17	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	38	9%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	17	4%	
SPA 6 Century	19	6%	
SPA 6 Compton	20	5%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	9	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	33	8%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	36	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	37	9%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	35	8%	
SPA 8 Torrance	20	5%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	14	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	427		



**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW  
Director

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MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

October 2, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

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- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

The Runaway Task Force last convened on September 7, 2006. At that meeting additional strategies were re-capped, and possible initiatives, which the waiver may potentially fund, were discussed. The Department will report on those strategies and/or initiatives once they have been further explored.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

As outlined in the July 1, 2006 Board report, the Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor for runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this practice.

### **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

As reported in prior Board reports, the Department has completed the training of regional office staff on appropriate ARK's data entry. In addition, to continue on-going maintenance of the data, we have will be conducting a "Train the Trainer" exercise to ensure that there is overall comprehension of the obligation to maintain efficient and expedient data entry.

### **III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Department, through task force recommendation, continues its efforts to interface with the State in reporting Runaways as missing when suitable. It is critical to the Department's mission to make certain that we are forming collaborative partnerships in an effort to keep children and youth safe. We will detail updates in subsequent reports to the Board.

### **IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

### **V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

Each Supervisor  
October 2, 2006  
Page 3

## **CONCLUSION**

DCFS continues to discuss and implement strategies, which will effectively reduce the runaway population. We are also aware that additional modifications must be explored to further accommodate this challenging population.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Acting Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**

**October 2, 2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Totals / Subtotal</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	420		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	14	3%	
14-17 years old	406	97%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	420		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	293	70%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	127	30%	
	420		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	2	0%	
Black	120	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	15	4%	
Hispanic/Latino	226	54%	
White	57	14%	
	420		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	187	45%	
Group Home	149	35%	
Relative/Guardian Home	79	19%	
(Not Indicated)	5	1%	
	420		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	13	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	24	6%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	27	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	19	5%	
SPA 3 El Monte	2	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	35	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	13	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	15	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	39	9%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	18	4%	
SPA 6 Century	18	6%	
SPA 6 Compton	18	4%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	8	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	32	8%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	34	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	36	9%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	30	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	23	5%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	12	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	420		



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW  
Director

**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors

GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District

ZEY YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

November 7, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**UPDATES**

The last Runaway Task Force was convened on October 19, 2006. The meeting included group discussion on ways the Department could further champion the needs of the Runaway population via individual offices. The concept would encompass much of what has been discussed since the reconvening of the Task Force – that of keeping the Runaway population, its concerns and challenges, visible to office and overall departmental operations. Additional discussion included potential follow-up steps later in dealing with sub-categories within the Runaway population and are further delineated in this report.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

### **I. Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

The Department's Emergency Response Command Post maintains its procedures by which to monitor the runaway youth. The division also continues to document specific information on that population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this practice.

### **II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

The Department has completed the "Train the Trainer" exercise to ensure there is an expert within each Service Bureau readily available to dispense expert advice on challenges and issues relating to Runaways. These 'experts' remain available for detail and assistance ranging from challenges concerning data entry to policy questions.

### **III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Law Enforcement sub-committee has been dedicating effort to interfacing with various law enforcement agencies for expedited processing of Runaway Youth. The sub-committee reports that several law enforcement agencies are actively revamping policies and procedures, which are more in alignment with the Department's protocols.

### **IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

### **V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth Sub-committee reported on the Department's efforts via its Emancipation section. There have been "Youth Development" classes added to the roster of ILP resources for all youth. Also, in line with youth feedback, the section has added additional free therapy service resources. Youth may access information on classes and mental health resources via the ILP Internet web site. Additionally, as a response to youth feedback, the Department has also created an updated resource directory that outlines over 90 resources, ranging from hotlines, medical services, emergency food shelters, counseling, legal services and parenting education.

The Department's Out-of-Home Care and Policy sections are currently reviewing the resource directory to sanction distribution internally and for use by external stakeholders.

### **CONCLUSION**

The October 19<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting also yielded a great deal of discussion on potential follow up steps to be taken now that data entry is stable and the Runaway population is more comprehensively understood. Topics discussed included the following: Termination of jurisdiction for those youth over 18 who have made appropriate, documented living arrangements; examining ASFA exemptions for waiver latitude; and, continuing to examine the Department's ability to procure individualized resources for sub-populations of Runaway Youth. Follow up discussion will take place on the above-mentioned topics at the next Runaway Task Force meeting scheduled for December 14, 2006.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**

**November 6, 2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Totals / Subtotal</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	412		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	13	3%	
14-17 years old	399	97%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	412		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	291	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	121	29%	
	412		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	119	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	2%	
Hispanic/Latino	226	55%	
White	54	13%	
	412		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	182	44%	
Group Home	145	35%	
Relative/Guardian Home	77	19%	
(Not Indicated)	8	2%	
	412		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	12	3%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	21	5%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	22	5%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	32	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	16	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	44	11%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	17	4%	
SPA 6 Century	20	7%	
SPA 6 Compton	18	4%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	8	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	33	8%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	32	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	32	8%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	29	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	19	5%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	13	3%	
(Not Indicated)	0	0%	
	412		



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW  
Director

**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

December 5, 2006

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District  
YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District  
DON KNABE  
Fourth District  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

*Patricia S. Ploehn*  
From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW  
Director

**DECEMBER 6, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #16 RE: MISSING CHILDREN MONTHLY UPDATE**

On December 6, 2005, your Board directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to reconvene the Missing Children Task Force in order to continue in the identification and refinement of practices for the prevention and recovery of runaways; and to report back on a monthly basis with status updates on the following:

- I. Existing Countywide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide;
- II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Website;
- III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways;
- IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3), and;
- V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.

**CURRENT STATUS**

- I. **Existing County-wide and community-specific services and programs, including the support that the DCFS Emergency Response Command Post can provide:**

This Department division continues to document specific information on the runaway population for use in regionally based Team Decision-Making (TDM) conferences. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this practice.

**II. Improved maintenance of the DCFS Missing Children Web site:**

The ARKs website continues to be maintained in accordance with existing protocol, policy and procedure. At the onset of reporting to the Board the Department had major challenges to contend with, including the clean-up and regular maintenance of the website. Currently we have implemented practices, which continue to ensure consistent and appropriate input of information via the use of ARKs liaisons. Additionally, the Department conducted a mass training for personnel tasked with data entry and for "experts" tasked with the assistance of data entry.

**III. Enhancement of the DCFS Child Protection Hotline to provide specialized support for runaways:**

The Hotline now regularly interfaces with local law enforcement jurisdictions when Runaway reports are made. As detailed in past reports to the Board, Hotline personnel have been trained on asking specific questions when dealing with Runaway youth. Staff also have access to a broader array of resources, which may assist both youth and caregivers. Finally, the Law Enforcement sub-committee continues to work on forwarding additional strategies, which will strengthen ties between the Hotline, regional offices and law enforcement agencies.

**IV. Consideration of using the Permanency Partners Program (P-3):**

As outlined in the March 1, 2006 Board report, all runaways are now referred to P-3 staff. A follow-up report will be made to your Board upon any changes regarding this initiative.

**V. Addressing the issues that have been raised by youth who have been or are in care of the Department through corrections and modifications to the Department's policy.**

The Youth sub-committee continues to provide feedback for the resource directory that, once sanctioned, will be circulated to youth and caregivers. Additionally, both the Emancipation and the Public Affairs divisions regularly provide information on events, resources, activities, etc., which impact youth. Both divisions also put a great deal of effort in making their respective sites accessible and user friendly to the youth we serve.

**CONCLUSION**

The Department has been reporting on its runaway youth as resolved by the Board for a year, as was the commitment. At this time, systemic changes have been made which allow the department to accurately count its runaways, plan for enhanced service delivery options, and forge strategic and collaborative community and stakeholder alliances.

The Department's runaway count at the onset of this reporting commitment, which began again in January 2006, was 505. Midway through our reporting time frame the number of runaways was at 450. Presently, the count is 416. The average number of runaways for this year is 431.

As stated in past year's reports to the Board we have conducted significant analysis regarding this population. The results, including substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health challenges make the case for enhancing existing resources and soliciting specific resources. We have begun some of this work out of our Out-of-Home Care Division. We have also dedicated P-3 staff from the onset and the Director has dedicated a manager to this population as agreed upon. This individual is aligned with the Homeless Program as both populations have comparable challenges.

This report concludes the year-long reporting obligation to the Board. However, we remain committed to accessing and devising and reporting on strategies, which will further reduce the runaway population.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact me, or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:AS:cm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**Abducted & Runaway Foster Childrens System (ARKS)**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON RUNAWAY CHILDREN SERVICED BY DCFS**

**December 4, 2006**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Totals / Subtotal</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Runaway DCFS Foster Children as reported in ARKS System</b>	416		
<b>Age</b>			
0-9 years old	0	0%	
10-13 years old	15	4%	
14-17 years old	401	96%	Majority are teenagers 14-17
	416		
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	296	71%	More girls than boys runaway
Male	120	29%	
	416		
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	3	1%	
Black	121	29%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	13	3%	
Hispanic/Latino	221	53%	
White	58	14%	
	416		
<b>Placement Type</b>			
Foster Home	179	43%	
Group Home	149	36%	
Relative/Guardian Home	79	19%	
(Not Indicated)	9	2%	
	416		
<b>Location of CSW</b>			
SPA 1 Lancaster	15	4%	
SPA 1 Palmdale	26	6%	
SPA 2 North Hollywood	25	6%	
SPA 2 Santa Clarita	19	5%	
SPA 3 El Monte	1	0%	
SPA 3 Glendora	33	8%	
SPA 3 Pasadena	14	3%	
SPA 3 Pomona	16	4%	
SPA 4 Metro North	42	10%	
SPA 5 West Los Angeles	15	4%	
SPA 6 Century	23	8%	
SPA 6 Compton	14	3%	
SPA 6 Hawthorne	8	2%	
SPA 6 Wateridge	38	9%	
SPA 7 Belvedere	34	8%	
SPA 7 Santa Fe Springs	31	7%	
SPA 8 Lakewood	30	7%	
SPA 8 Torrance	15	4%	
Adoptions	4	1%	
Specialized Programs	8	2%	
(Not Indicated)	5	1%	
	416		